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An Open Letter to DoD's Civilian Employees:

The Department of Defense's civilian workforce is one of our country's most important national security assets. As we develop a process for designing and implementing the National Security Personnel System (NSPS), we want to ensure that all stakeholders in the new system -- including civilian employees, managers, and exclusive representatives -- have an opportunity to provide their thoughts, ideas, views and concerns.

The task before us is to design a transformed system for the Department's 700,000 civilian employees that supports our national security mission while treating workers fairly and protecting their rights. But the NSPS is a means to that end, not the end itself. Secretary Rumsfeld has directed the implementation of NSPS to be inclusive and comprehensive.

DoD teams are working closely with the Office of Personnel Management, the Office of Management and Budget, and the Government Accounting Office. These teams will develop a comprehensive design and implementation process that will be presented to the Department's senior leadership in April. After internal approval, we will discuss the approach with Congress.

We are determined to take the time necessary to do the job right. As we work to refine the NSPS, the procedures and concepts will likely change over time. During this period of collaboration, you will have a variety of means by which to get information about NSPS. In the near future, please take time to do one or several of the following:

- Tune in to DoD's internal news outlets, including Defenselink.mil and DefendAmerica.mil, featuring articles by the Armed Forces Press Service.
- Watch The Pentagon Channel or your local military television programming for announcements of upcoming "town hall" meetings and other Q&A sessions with DoD officials involved in NSPS design and development.
- Visit the NSPS website at **www.cpms.osd.mil/nsps** to receive the most recent and up-to-date information. The website also provides opportunity to offer comments and suggestions.

Be patient as the process is still being defined, but working together, we can make this a world-class system to support our world-class team of civilian employees at the Department of Defense. Thank you.

David S.C. Chu
Under Secretary of Defense for
Personnel & Readiness

Gordon England
Secretary of the Navy